

Transcript of the Testimony of

Date: January 17, 2018

Case: THE COMMUNITY MEETING NO. 2 - FOR THE
PROPOSED CLOSURES OF HOPE, HARPER, ROBESON AND
TEAM ENGLEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

TOOMEY REPORTING
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COMMUNITY MEETING PRESENTATION

January 17, 2018
COMMENCING AT 6:00 P.M.

HELD AT HAMILTON PARK FIELD HOUSE
513 West 72nd Street
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

IN RE: The Community Meeting No. 2 - for the Proposed
Closures of Hope, Harper, Robeson and TEAM
Englewood High Schools

The record of proceedings had in the meeting of
the above-entitled cause, taken before SHAHERA ALI,
C.S.R, and Notary Public, in and for the County of Cook
and State of Illinois, at 513 West 72nd Street, Chicago,
Illinois, January 17th, 2018, at 6:00 p.m.

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2 PRESENT:

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4 MR. CHIP JOHNSON, Facilitator

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6 DR. JULIOUS LAWSON, Network Chief and Deputy
7 Chief

8 MS. MEGAN HOUGARD, Chief of Network 11

9 MS. LIZ KIRBY, Chief of School Strategy and
10 Planning

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12 MS. JADINE CHOU, Chief of Safety and Security

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14 MR. LORENZO CRAIG, Introducing speakers by
numbers

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1 MR. JOHNSON: Let me introduce everyone. Ms. Liz
2 Kirby who is our chief of Office of Network Support at
3 Chicago Public Schools. She will be doing part of the
4 presentation. Our Deputy Chief for Network 11,
5 Dr. Julius Lawson is also here.

6 The chief of Network 11, Megan Hougard, is here.
7 And then our chief of safety and security for Chicago
8 Public Schools will also be making a presentation as
9 part of our slides.

10 I like to recognize our alderman, Roderick
11 Sawyer, is here as well. And let me make sure I'm not
12 missing anybody. Principal Leonetta Sanders from Harper
13 is also here.

14 [Audience Interruption.]

15 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. I think we will probably
16 be expecting some of our other principals tonight so we
17 will welcome them as they come.

18 If you have needs for a sign language -- Are our
19 sign language interpreters, are you here? Okay. Thank
20 you. If there's any need there. And then we will
21 also -- Slide two for me, Sadie. We will also be
22 presenting to you -- not presenting but these people
23 will be available for those who may have some questions
24 for the Office of Diverse Learners and our specialized

1 supports representatives here, representatives from
2 students in temporary living situations. And then also
3 representatives from Student Outreach and Re-engagement
4 Centers. And also representatives from our talent
5 department.

6 They will be available for 30 minutes after this
7 meeting. Of course, those are private conversations
8 that you will have, and they will not be formally
9 recorded.

10 Slide three says the community. This will take
11 place over a course of two hours as we know. And this
12 goal is to provide first a brief presentation that you
13 will see here and then we will go into public comment.

14 If you don't have a chance to comment tonight,
15 we will accept your comments at transitions@cps.edu.
16 You can also submit written comments at the registration
17 desk where you came in. A staff member will give you a
18 card if you feel the need to do that. And all these
19 meeting notes and summaries will be available to you at
20 our website, cps.edu/transitions five days after the
21 meeting.

22 This meeting is part of a broader timeline. CPS
23 began publishing the draft guidelines for school actions
24 on October 1st and then announcing the proposed action

1 on December 1st. Following this announcement, CPS
2 hosted -- This is our second community meeting, and we
3 will have one public hearing at the end of this month to
4 gather additional feedback. I will give you the date
5 and time for that at the end of this meeting.

6 The CEO, Dr. Jackson, at that time may make a
7 recommendation to the Board to vote on the proposed
8 action and then following the potential recommendation,
9 the Board will vote on whether or not to approve the
10 action at the February board meeting.

11 We do have a presentation that we want to bring
12 up now, and I'm going to ask Chief Hougard and her
13 staff, Dr. Julius Lawson, if they will come up and walk
14 you through the proposal just so that those may be
15 attending for the first time can understand exactly what
16 this is all about. Thank you.

17 MS. HOUGARD: Thank you. Good evening. I do want
18 to also thank you all for coming. I see many teachers
19 and students here as well and appreciate you all taking
20 the time and being open to the conversations we've had
21 at the schools.

22 As Mr. Johnson said, the timeline -- Moving on
23 to the next slide. The district spent a lot of time
24 engaging the public before this proposal was launched.

1 The Englewood CAC recommended -- after meeting for about
2 a year, recommended that CPS create a new state of the
3 art high school and invest in Englewood, as well as
4 planning for the transition with the existing high
5 schools.

6 In turn, in June of 2017, CPS followed through
7 on the recommendation by formally proposing an
8 investment to create that state of the art neighborhood
9 high school, and I say neighborhood, open enrollment
10 high school intentionally. The investment started as a
11 \$75 million commitment, and it has grown to a \$85
12 million commitment.

13 When CPS accepted the proposal to move forward,
14 we also created a community leadership Steering
15 Committee. The Steering Committee has been tasked
16 through many meetings often challenging conversations to
17 talk about the focus of the school and to plan for the
18 transition of the existing Englewood high schools.

19 Over these multiple meetings between the
20 Steering Committee and CPS leadership, as well as visits
21 to the existing Englewood high schools, a variety of
22 options were considered. Those options for the current
23 high schools included closure and multi-year phaseouts.
24 And ultimately the vote that was taken was on two

1 options and the majority vote of the Steering Committee
2 was to close the high schools at the end of 2017-18
3 school year, providing robust transitions for
4 individualized student support as part of the draft
5 transition plan.

6 The meetings have included parent meetings,
7 student meetings, open public meetings, of course.
8 Administrators and teachers have been present as well
9 and broader communities meetings. And we have heard
10 many things including concerns from students as well.

11 Should the Board vote for this proposed school
12 action, the Steering Committee has been clear that the
13 district must provide robust supports. The supports
14 that are included in the transition plan are directly
15 from those conversations in the Steering Committee.

16 Students will not automatically be assigned to a
17 new school, rather we will have individual meetings with
18 parents and students to really have a private
19 conversation of what is the best fit for that
20 transition. And then there will be extensive planning
21 around those supports. And we'll talk about that in
22 further slides.

23 And the committee also really focused on the
24 need for academic supports this year before the end of

1 this school year. Those will include after school
2 programs. We talked about transportation needs and
3 really robust safety plans that Jadine Chou will discuss
4 as well.

5 So in the upcoming slides, you will see more
6 details about all of those supports, and I know there
7 are members of the Steering Committee here as well.
8 But, again, it was really heartfelt, thought, tough
9 conversations in those Steering Committees to put all of
10 those pieces together in the transition plan.

11 So over the last ten years and we've talked a
12 lot about declining enrollment, but it's really in the
13 last ten years we've seen declines from 70 to 85 percent
14 of students at these Englewood high schools.

15 When I worked at Harper, we had 900 students.
16 That wasn't that many years ago. When you look at what
17 that means now, the majority of our elementary students,
18 92 percent, in fact, who live in these high school
19 boundaries go to other schools outside of the Englewood
20 community. The existing -- The current Englewood
21 schools that are left with between 90 and 135 students
22 at each of the schools.

23 When we visited -- When the Steering Committee
24 visited the high schools, the reality of what you can

1 offer within a school with 90 to 135 students was really
2 what stood out for us all and that's where the plan --
3 the robust supports came in, the planning.

4 MR. LAWSON: So in thinking around the new high
5 school -- First, it feels really good to be back at
6 Hamilton Park. I used to take wood shop classes here
7 and after school classes as well, but that's not why I'm
8 here.

9 So just think around the proposal. So in June
10 of 2017, CPS decided to move forward with the CAC's
11 proposal to -- the CAC's recommendation to propose this
12 \$85 million investment in Englewood. This \$85 million
13 state of the art neighborhood high school.

14 Should the Board approve this -- Should the
15 Board approve this proposal, I'm sorry, the school is
16 slated to open in the fall 2019 with a freshman class
17 only and so if you have been around the city or watching
18 the moves of the district, you will notice that Sara Lee
19 Goode and Dyett have both opened with freshman classes
20 only.

21 Some of the highlights in thinking around the
22 school itself will include a school-based health center
23 that will provide access to the community, comprehensive
24 primary care, behavioral health as well for all of the

1 residents of Englewood, and it will be situated in the
2 high school.

3 There will be a really strong partnership with
4 Kennedy-King College which will include early college
5 programs. Of course, the sports facility will also be
6 offered to the community, as well as the high school
7 students there, of course. And with that, I would like
8 to hand it over to Chief Liz Kirby, Office of Network
9 Support. She has a really extensive knowledge of the
10 schools being the former chief of Network 11.

11 MS. KIRBY: Thank you. Good evening, everyone. My
12 name is Liz Kirby. I was previously the chief of
13 Network 11 from 2011 until 2015 so I have intimate
14 knowledge of the schools and the challenges that they
15 have been facing specifically as it relates to
16 enrollment and the challenges in offering a full
17 academic program of students as your enrollment
18 continues to decline.

19 I'm going to talk about a couple of things. The
20 first is, I'm going to go over what the transition plans
21 would look like for students that are currently enrolled
22 at those schools. We will talk about supports for the
23 spring, supports for the summer and then ongoing
24 supports.

I'm not going to read through each and every bullet point here because I know you all are also reviewing this. One point I want to underscore is that we are going to invest \$8.3 million in a three and a half year transition program to ensure that as schools -- as students go to different schools, they have both the academic and the social emotional supports that they need.

Megan talked about the individual meetings that will happen with students and families in the individualized transition plans. We want to make sure that students go to schools that really connect to their interest, that will meet the needs that they have identified, and that they will go to those schools with information to help those new principals and new teachers really support them in realizing their high school goals but also post secondary outcomes.

So some of those supports that will happen beginning this spring include workshops in a high school fair so parents can really find out the types of programs that schools will be offering for students. Again, those individualized transition plans which will include not only the academic supports but also any needed post secondary social emotional supports, safety

1 plans, et cetera.

2 Tutoring and academic supports for students will
3 be offered and we will work -- My job -- I oversee all
4 the networks in all the schools so we will also
5 continuously make sure that the academic quality that
6 students are getting exposed to at those schools meet
7 their needs and make needed adjustments accordingly.

8 We have resources that we will have for students
9 who need additional assistance. That include students
10 that are in our temporary living program, STLS program,
11 and students that are diverse learners and will continue
12 to work with principals around all these supports.

13 For the summer, some of the supports that we
14 have planned include jobs for students and if needed,
15 academic -- any kind of academic support either
16 enrichment or remediation based upon the academic needs
17 of the students. And we also want to make sure that
18 they have an opportunity to meet the students and the
19 staff and the principal in leadership of their new
20 schools to make that transition.

21 So one thing that we do at many of our high
22 schools is we do a freshman connection program to make
23 sure the students get acclimated to their new
24 environment. We're imagining a similar program where

1 students have an early opportunity to get acclimated to
2 the school that they decide to attend.

3 In terms of ongoing supports, and a lot of this
4 has come out in the discussions that we've been having
5 both with the Steering Committee and at the schools
6 talking to students and parents and teachers, so the
7 transportation has come up as a big issue. So during
8 this transition period, we will have free CTA cards for
9 students. We will be expanding the safe passage routes
10 as needed ensuring safe travel for students. And,
11 again, the academic supports will continue and the
12 social emotional supports will continue for students as
13 well.

14 My job -- Megan and Julious work with the
15 students in the schools in Network 11. My job is to
16 work with all schools. And so I will be working with
17 all schools, chiefs and those principals to make sure
18 that each and every one of these students is having a
19 good experience and if we need to make adjustments, we
20 make those adjustments accordingly.

21 The next thing that I wanted to talk about is
22 another topic that came up in the last meeting. There
23 were quite a few speakers that talked about, if we're
24 spending this amount of money for a new school, we

1 should take those same funds and invest them back into
2 the four high schools. So I wanted to provide a little
3 historical perspective just in response to those
4 comments. I understand where they are coming from, but
5 I think a lot of times people aren't aware of the
6 previous supports that we've provided to schools.

7 So in terms of programmatic investments, and I
8 know this both in my current role but also as a former
9 chief, when we go through the budgeting process every
10 year with schools, for these particular high schools,
11 we've had to add additional funds just so they can offer
12 the classes that kids need to graduate.

13 So before this school plan, before any of the
14 committee work, each and every principal I would have
15 conversations around, let's look at your schedule, let's
16 look at what the kids need, and they would talk to me
17 about additional funds that they needed to run the
18 school.

19 We have made over \$4 million in investments over
20 the past three years at these schools. In addition, I
21 think many people do know that Harper was a turnaround
22 school but TEAM also was a part of their renaissance
23 2010 program. When we look at the funds invested for
24 both Harper and TEAM, we have almost \$6 million of

1 investments for those schools.

2 Finally, if we look at capital investments, just
3 in the '06-'07 school year, we have \$29 million in
4 capital investments. So this is not a situation where
5 no money has been given to these schools. This has been
6 additional money that we've provided knowing that we
7 really wanted to make sure kids have what they needed in
8 order to meet the requirements to graduate.

9 The challenge of having declining enrollment
10 makes it difficult to offer a wide variety of classes.
11 And so this has been the district's response to assist
12 these schools to meet those requirements.

13 So we've made these investments. Megan was at
14 Harper as an assistant principal when they were a SIG
15 school. In spite of that, enrollment has continued to
16 decline and decline and decline at these schools. I
17 just wanted to provide that context.

18 I'm next going to turn it over to Jadine who can
19 talk more specifically about safety supports and plans
20 for the school.

21 MS. CHOU: Good evening, everybody. I am the chief
22 of safety and security for Chicago Public Schools, and
23 we thought it would be worthwhile to call out a specific
24 section on safety and security because safety -- One

1 thing we can all agree on is that safety is our top
2 priority for our children.

3 We have been having parent meetings. We have
4 been having student meetings and over and over we
5 continue to hear, how are we going to address safety
6 concerns. So I want to take a quick moment to just give
7 some background. And, again, you have seen some of this
8 in previous slides that others have spoken this evening
9 already, but I want to bring it into the context of
10 safety.

11 Currently, 92 percent of students living within
12 the Englewood boundaries, students who are eligible to
13 attend these Englewood schools are currently already
14 traveling outside to other schools in other communities.
15 Why that's important is because we've already worked
16 through some of these issues. It's not to say we've
17 worked through all of them, but we do understand some of
18 the things that happened when children travel and
19 commute to other communities.

20 Some examples of some of the highest enrolled
21 schools right now is Simeon, Dunbar, Hyde Park, Curie.
22 These are schools that kids within the Englewood
23 boundary are currently attending from within this
24 neighborhood.

1 So to address these safety concerns, and I'm
2 going to give a very high-level approach here, but I
3 want to start by saying, every child going through this
4 transition will get an individualized safety plan. We
5 will make sure of that, that all these safety concerns
6 are addressed on an individualized basis which will
7 depend on that child's specific situation and their
8 school selection.

9 One thing in common of everyone, for those who
10 will be commuting, they will have, as we stated on the
11 previous slide, free CTA cards to get them to and from
12 their selected schools. We currently use safe passage
13 in many of our schools. We will expand those safe
14 passage routes. Considering, depending on where these
15 children are going, we want to make sure that we have
16 sufficient coverage.

17 We talked about this earlier. For those that --
18 where there are CTA buses, we will stage these buses so
19 that we don't have big groups of children waiting for
20 their buses at arrival and at dismissal. This is
21 feedback that we've heard from parents. This is
22 feedback that we've heard from the Steering Committee.

23 One more thing that's not on the slide that I
24 want to call out that's very important that we heard

1 loud and clear from adults which is, if there are a
2 certain number of kids that choose a school, let's say,
3 20 kids choose school blah, blah, blah, we would love to
4 work with parents to decide is a shuttle bus a good
5 option for those children.

6 We heard from the adults that shuttle busses
7 would be appealing for children. We heard from some of
8 the students, however, who are very independent in some
9 cases, I'm too cool to ride a yellow bus. These are
10 things that we want to work out, though. If that is
11 something that works for the communities, if that is
12 something that makes parents feel safer and children
13 feel safer, these are things that CPS are willing to
14 bring to the table.

15 So just to sum up the safety portion of this and
16 for those of you who are parents in the room and those
17 of you who are community stakeholders in the room, you
18 will continue to see me and my team work with you
19 individually. We want to make sure your concerns are
20 addressed. This is just the beginning of the
21 conversation and whatever is decided out of these
22 proposal discussions, we are here to make sure that
23 these children are safe.

24 So with that, I'm going to turn it back over to

1 my colleague, Chip Johnson.

2 MR. JOHNSON: All right. Good evening. I would
3 like to also welcome state Senator Jacqueline Collins
4 who is here. Again, I introduced Alderman Rod Sawyer.
5 Also, President Craig Lynch from Kennedy-King is here as
6 well and Commander Kenneth Johnson from the Seventh
7 District.

8 So let me say something before we get into
9 public comment. We know that there's two minutes for
10 public comment. There is a timekeeper. Where is the
11 timekeeper? Right here, all right. She will notify
12 you. Sometimes I give a little leeway. I don't stop
13 you right at two minutes if you have a point that you
14 have not finished but please be respectful of the time
15 for the two minutes.

16 And the other thing is we welcome everybody into
17 the room. As I said at the beginning of this meeting
18 tonight, that Englewood has a legacy of being a powerful
19 community in the City of Chicago. And one of the things
20 that we are continuing to try to do is build up our
21 communities for us as well.

22 In doing that, there are some things we don't
23 like. We have been through a lot in Chicago. We have
24 been through a lot in our communities in both -- I live

1 in Bronzeville but before Bronzeville, it was called
2 what? The low end.

3 [Audience Interruption.]

4 MR. JOHNSON: Exactly. There are a lot of things
5 that we've seen in the transformation of our city but in
6 our community such as Englewood and people like -- I'll
7 just reference Dr. Martin Luther King because we just
8 celebrated his birthday and people like that who have
9 walked through these communities and been a part of this
10 community.

11 Tonight we want to really just honor that legacy
12 of our people in Englewood in our communities. We can
13 do that to agree and disagree. But one thing, as I said
14 to everybody at the beginning of this meeting, I don't
15 want to turn on the TV and see my people in disarray and
16 have people laughing at their TV sets.

17 I don't want to see that. If we can just listen
18 to the speakers. Everybody has a point. They are
19 important. This hurts our children. It hurts our
20 children at Harper, TEAM, Robeson and TEAM Englewood.
21 It hurts our staff. It hurts our students. It hurts --

22 [Audience Interruption.]

23 MR. JOHNSON: Excuse me. It hurts. And I'm a part
24 of this. But all I want to do is just ask that tonight,

1 as we listen to those passionate voices, that we just
2 provide the culture of respect that we can get everybody
3 on the mic and get it through. So two minutes for a
4 speaker. You will be timed. Your comments will be
5 recorded. We have a stenographer in the room and then
6 we also have our sign interpreter as well.

7 Jadine, use this one.

8 MS. CHOU: I'm sorry. I was just made aware. I
9 have an announcement to make for the audience. If there
10 is a participant tonight here named Travon O'Neal, if
11 you are still in the room, if you can please check in
12 with the park district office right outside, we have
13 something we believe you dropped. Travon O'Neal, if you
14 are in the room, please check in outside. Thank you.

15 MR. JOHNSON: This is how it will work. We're going
16 to call numbers, and I'm going to ask the speakers to
17 lineup over here by the stage. We will call you up in
18 order, then you will come up this way to address the
19 microphone. When your comments have been completed, we
20 ask that you exit this aisle. But, please, all speakers
21 lineup on the outer aisle this way, and we will have a
22 little flow here going.

23 So let's start with our speakers tonight. We're
24 going to call speakers one through five. Lorenzo Craig

1 will be calling the rest of the speakers. We will start
2 over here. Speakers one through five over here. All of
3 our speakers tonight, if you all could please come up
4 and state your name. If it's a different type of
5 spelling, please spell it so that our court reporter or
6 stenographer can get the correct spelling of your name,
7 okay.

8 Again, these comments are public. They will be
9 posted on our website and if we can get our first
10 speaker. Thank you.

11 [Whereupon, the speakers
12 began speaking.]
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1 MS. CONSTANOPOLOS: Good evening. My name is
2 Theodria Constanopoulos. I'm a resident of Englewood for
3 40 some years. I have a granddaughter in Randolph
4 School. She's in seventh grade. I received
5 guardianship of five grandchildren in 2011.

6 I am in favor of the new proposal. I'm in favor
7 of the new high school. Before this, I was looking at
8 high schools outside of Englewood. I am now considering
9 the new high school.

10 When my grandchildren came here from Wisconsin,
11 I became their guardian. I had to send my grandchildren
12 to a neighborhood school. They went to Robeson and one
13 went to Harper. I had no other choices for them at that
14 moment. If I had, I would have used them.

15 The reason why I think this is a good plan is
16 that it gives us something that we can build on here in
17 Englewood. Now, if we stop thinking or feeling with our
18 hearts about the closing of the four schools and think
19 with our head, this is the best thing for the young
20 people in these high schools. It gives them choices.
21 It gives them support. It gives them the opportunity to
22 grow.

23 So in closing, I would just like to say, begin
24 to think about the positive. Change hurts. I know,

1 young people, school feels like family and change hurts.
2 But think with your head and grieve the loss of your
3 school but think about the progress and what you have in
4 the future.

5 MS. BUTLER: Good evening, Englewood. I am Aisha
6 Butler, the president of Rage. I'm also the president
7 of the Hamilton Park Pack, this particular park, and I'm
8 also a member of the Steering Committee. I stand with
9 you with two other residents who have served on the
10 Steering Committee with a position of statement that we
11 would like to give to CPS tonight.

12 We feel that our Steering Committee has been
13 compromised, not only by some of the things that we saw
14 at the last meeting but also as well as some of the
15 things that we witnessed within those meetings.

16 We will resign effective immediately if the
17 Steering Committee is not restructured that would
18 include parents who have young people who will be going
19 to the new school that would not include additional
20 residents, as well as other educators who are not in a
21 position to have secret agendas on the Steering
22 Committee.

23 We are also asking that all of our notes, our
24 well and unscripted notes that are posted on the CPS

1 website so that the information that is shared on our
2 Steering Committee is transparent and not explained in a
3 way that can be misleading to the public.

4 All of us, five of us, on the Steering
5 Committee, as Keith Harris said at the last meeting, did
6 not vote for option one, nor option two. We are still
7 in support of neighborhood schools, as well as in
8 support of a brand new school.

9 [Audience Interruption.]

10 MR. JOHNSON: Again, I would just like to make it
11 clear. My name is Eddie Johnson. I'm the executive
12 director of Antioch Community Social Service. Myself,
13 Gloria Williams, Aisha Butler, Keith Harris, do not be
14 misled. We did not recommend or vote at any time for
15 the closing of any Englewood high schools. I'm a
16 parent. I live in the community, and I'm an alumni of
17 Englewood High School. By no way we would do that, but
18 we are in support of neighborhood high schools.

19 MS. WILLIAMS: Hi, I'm Gloria Williams. I'm voices
20 of West Englewood. And, again, we oppose of any of the
21 neighborhood schools to be closed.

22 MS. BUTLER: Again, our demands are we will resign
23 immediately if there's not a restructuring of the
24 Steering Committee, if we do not revisit the proposal

1 and that we do not have additional residents and parents
2 on the part of the Steering Committee. Thank you.

3 MR. RICHARD: Good evening. My name is Lawrence
4 Richard, and I'm a resident of Englewood. Thirty-six
5 years ago I attended a transition school at that time
6 which was Hope. At that time it was a middle school.
7 And then we faced the same fears in our position that is
8 going on now 36 years later. It didn't turn out bad
9 when I went there, okay.

10 I don't see how it is feasible to keep four
11 schools open with that low enrollment. I am for closing
12 those schools and opening the new one. But what I am
13 against is the way the Board of Education conducts its
14 business because the location, the site was a done deal
15 when you started having the meetings.

16 There's a big empty lot up there where the old
17 Kennedy-King which is close to the Red Line and
18 everything else where you could have built the school.
19 You didn't have to tear down the structure. Okay. So
20 where I am for the closing in combination because you
21 cannot continue to keep these schools open with that
22 enrollment. I am against the way the Board of Education
23 conducts a lot of its business and meetings. As far as
24 that goes, the city as a whole, okay.

I think that people -- You can't be concerned --
2 You're spending all of this money about safety issues.
3 Black people have to learn how to live together. The
4 whole concept of a district school and a school
5 combination goes on in the suburbs and it's been going
6 on for years. It is time for it to happen here. We can
7 no long, as taxpayers, afford to keep all these
8 buildings open for nothing.

9 MR. CRAIG: Speakers six through ten, please lineup
10 by the stage. Speakers six through ten.

11 MR. BUINO: Hello, my name is Michael Buino,
12 B-u-i-n-o. I'm in my fifth year as a teacher at Harper
13 High School, and I teach theater. I've heard many
14 people speak about what they believe to be happening
15 inside of our school; that Harper teachers don't teach,
16 but I wanted to set the record straight. Learning is
17 happening every day in Harper.

18 When Principal Sanders brought me on staff,
19 there hadn't been a theater program at Harper. It
20 wasn't even part of the school culture. But with the
21 support of my administration and time, our students have
22 built one of the best theater programs in any
23 neighborhood high school in this city.

24 Harper students regularly compete against

1 students from selective enrollment and charter schools.
2 Harper High School is the only CPS neighborhood school
3 to put finalists in the city wide (inaudible) monologue
4 competition for four straight years.

5 [Audience Interruption.]

6 MR. BUINO: Harper has had four medalists in the
7 Chicago Southside NAACP ACT-SO Competition for both
8 theater and spoken word poetry. Harper High School has
9 had a student compete at the national level for the
10 NAACP ACT-SO Competition.

11 Harper High School has brought seniors to the
12 Illinois High School Theater Festival to audition for
13 colleges across the Midwest, and they have received over
14 \$260,000 in scholarship offers.

15 I have two students from my program currently
16 studying at Eastern Illinois University, another pair at
17 Northeastern Illinois University, and a number of
18 students in the City Colleges of Chicago.

19 Harper High School has raised over \$100,000 in
20 free programming for students to bring professional
21 artists into their classroom from Court Theater, Goodman
22 Theater and Chicago Dramatists. Harper students have
23 performed in the Hyde Park High School Theater Festival
24 for the past four years. We're performing there again

1 on Tuesday. An original script written by our advanced
2 honors theater academy students. Harper students see
3 more theatrical productions in a school year than any
4 other school in the city.

5 I say this to the people who don't believe, come
6 to my classroom, see for yourselves the community of
7 theater artists my students have created in an
8 underfunded, underserved neighborhood high school and
9 then tell me Harper is not worth saving. Thank you.

10 MR. BYNUM: Good evening, everyone. My name is
11 Curtis Bynum. I just got two quick questions that I
12 would like maybe this committee or someone, especially
13 considering the politics that surround this.

14 2008 they opened the brand new Miles Davis.
15 There was hope, there was promise. They closed Vernon
16 John. They combined two schools. Guess what, the
17 enrollment at that school is low right now. How would
18 you justify closing four schools because they had small
19 enrollment and then you open a new school? Is the
20 enrollment going to take off?

21 Number two. You got schools, the ten-year plan
22 where you saw the downsizing of these enrollments.
23 Well, what increased in the ten years? Charter schools.
24 So let's keep it real in here. If we are going to talk

1 about it, talk about it.

2 Okay. That's the point I want to make. This
3 mess is political because they got all of us bickering
4 and fighting each other. Meanwhile, under the table
5 there's some other shadiness going on so keep that in
6 mind. Thank you.

7 MS. BOYD: Good evening. My name is Miracle Boyd.
8 I go to John Hope College Prep. Martin Luther King once
9 said the function of education is to teach one to think
10 intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus
11 character. That is the goal of true education.

12 With this being said, it is clear to see, all
13 CPS students are not getting the proper education they
14 need to think critically when our schools are being
15 swept from under our feet. CPS wants to close our
16 schools and send us to school they see fit, but they
17 aren't the ones sitting in those chairs five days a week
18 struggling to learn because we don't have the
19 necessities we need as students, nor do our teachers.

20 With all that CPS has done, the last thing they
21 should do is close our schools. They're closing us due
22 to low enrollment and et cetera, but how is that our
23 fault when CPS can't provide the funds we need to make
24 our school look presentable, provide us with a rigorous

1 education and the tools we need to lead us to a road of
2 prosperity and success.

3 Plenty of suburban and north side schools have
4 more than south side and west side schools across
5 Chicago. For example, (inaudible,) school buses to pick
6 them up, iPads, Apple Computers, programs such as
7 I-Excel, (inaudible) Academy and programs that help them
8 get jobs. But us here on the south side, we take public
9 transportation. And the programs we used to have have
10 been taken away from us because we aren't making the
11 progress we need.

12 Furthermore, some Chicago high schools have more
13 things that other high schools don't. Why not use the
14 \$85 million, improve our education needs and get our
15 students on the road to success. Provide us students
16 with new ideas --

17 [Audience Interruption.]

18 MS. BOYD: (Inaudible) that allow us to think
19 intensely and give us the true education we deserve.

20 MS. WEST: Well spoken, well spoken. My name is
21 Tamia West. I am a resident of Englewood, born and
22 raised. I attend New Friendship Missionary Baptist
23 Church which is on 71st Street, and I'm very invested in
24 the community. And behind what that young lady said --

1 I mean, that was powerful.

2 For me, all four of the high schools that are
3 being proposed to close have a very rich history, and
4 they have a legacy as it reflects the community of
5 Englewood. And we want to hold on to that, and we
6 really want to hold firm to that because, like me, I
7 went to elementary school in Englewood, but I had to go
8 outside of Englewood in order to get that rich, rigorous
9 instruction that I wanted.

10 And thinking about the needs of the students and
11 what is worth saving or not worth saving, everything is
12 worth saving, especially when it pertains to the life of
13 a child. And so what we have to think about is, let the
14 plan not work us but let us work the plan as residents
15 of Englewood. We have to think about that.

16 I don't tend to leave Englewood. I'm going to
17 stay here. My grandparents were residents of Englewood.
18 They are deceased and so I stand on some very firm
19 shoulders. And I say to you, my community members, my
20 residents that we have to work the plan, and we have to
21 think about cultivating generations of learners. So
22 while the plan may be to close the schools, let us think
23 about how we can work this plan so that it saves the
24 lives of our children and give them the opportunities

1 they so deserve.

2 I thank you so much and let us just be active
3 listeners to the members that are here. Thank you.

4 MR. CRAIG: Speakers 11 through 15, please lineup
5 by the stage.

6 MR. JACKSON: Good afternoon. Good evening. My
7 name is Gregory Jackson. I'm a teacher at John Hope
8 School, and I am against the closing of the neighborhood
9 schools. I have been teaching at John Hope for 14 years
10 now. I feel like I am now a part of the fabric of the
11 Englewood community.

12 Through my 14 years of teaching at John Hope, I
13 have seen us produce so many great students that become
14 producing citizens in the city. I have watched them
15 become teachers. I have watched them become doctors,
16 lawyers, police officers and so on and so forth. So
17 when I heard about the closing of our schools, I was
18 disappointed but at the same time I was happy.

19 I thought that our students really do deserve a
20 brand new school so I was excited about that. But then
21 I found out that our schools will be closing before the
22 new school open so that made me kind of think
23 differently. And then I found out that our students are
24 not guaranteed a spot in this new school. So how are

1 you going to close down our school but not have a place
2 for our students to go to?

3 Not only that, I found out that the teachers and
4 administrators are not even guaranteed a spot in that
5 school so that made me think even more critically. At
6 that point, I begin to think. What do we do? What do I
7 begin to tell my students? I begin to look around my
8 classroom, and I saw students that come to school every
9 day, and they resist the temptation of drug dealing just
10 to come to school every day because they know that
11 education matters.

12 I watch them resist the temptation of becoming
13 drug dealers every day just to come to school because
14 they know that education matters. I watch these
15 students, male or female, have kids, but they don't use
16 that as an excuse. They still come to school every day
17 because they know that education matters.

18 How can you slap those students in the face?
19 I'm not talking about students that don't come to
20 school. I'm talking about the ones that come to school
21 every day. They deserve a chance to be in that state of
22 the art school.

23 I was always told don't complain if you don't
24 have a solution. So my solution is really, I am for

1 this school but only under the terms that our students
2 who work so hard every day get a chance to go to that
3 school. These neighborhood schools should not close
4 down until this new school opens up. And that's what I
5 have to say. Thank you all.

6 MR. SMITH: Darrell Smith. I just went to my 30th
7 year graduation anniversary at Harper High School.
8 Thirty years. First of all, I'm the spokesperson for
9 the Englewood Political Task Force, and I'm currently a
10 candidate for the Second District Commissioner of Cook
11 County.

12 Each one of these schools that they're trying to
13 close lies within my district that I'm running for so it
14 hits home. It hits home when I saw -- We went to -- We
15 had wood shop. We had automotive. We had home ec. We
16 had all of that. These schools don't have that now.

17 So if you see a pretty girl walking down the
18 street, she's attractive to you, you're going to go
19 after that. But if she's not that attractive, you're
20 not going to go for her. Same goes for the schools.
21 Make our schools attractive to the children, and they
22 will come back.

23 You have \$85 million. It was 75 million, then
24 out of the sky \$10 million fell and now it's \$85

1 million. But we have no funds. No funds. No science
2 programs at Harper High School, okay. How do you go
3 four years of high school with no science program?
4 Because they don't have funds, but they have \$85 million
5 to build a new school because Rahm Emanuel wants to be
6 the new mayor. It's election season. We have to wake
7 up.

8 Quit letting these people, I'll say these
9 people, playing with our children's lives. Stop it. I
10 had to sneak and put my name on the support list to be
11 number nine. My buddy, Keith Harris, signed the against
12 list and he's number 54. How does that happen? How
13 does that happen? How did I get up here this quick?
14 Because last time I saw the pattern. I see how they're
15 playing with our children's lives. Put the money in the
16 schools that are here. Put the money in the schools
17 that are here. You don't have to put 85 million in the
18 schools. Put 10 million in each school and watch what
19 happen.

20 Our so-called underachieving children, so-called
21 underachieving. That's a good way of calling our
22 children dummies. How are they going to achieve in this
23 high technology school that they're trying to build?
24 With all the technology they're talking about putting in

1 a \$85 million school, how are our underachievers going
2 to even be able to go to that school?

3 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

4 MR. SMITH: I think in two years after they
5 supposedly build the school, it will be closed, too.
6 How about that. Thank you.

7 MR. JULIAN: My name is Jamal Julian, and I'm with
8 an organization called Slow Roll Chicago. We work a lot
9 with the youth, and we work a lot in the various
10 communities of Chicago, and we advocate for walkable,
11 bikeable communities because we know there are more
12 healthier communities, there are more livable
13 communities and there are more sustainable communities,
14 but it requires that there will be community access.

15 You have to be able to access your community
16 grocery store, your community school, and you have to do
17 that over a period of time and that community becomes
18 more stable. But I'm here today as an Englewood
19 resident.

20 I have lived in Englewood previously. I have
21 returned to Englewood. I attended Lindblom High School,
22 and I'm a parent of a high school-aged child that is not
23 going to be able to attend the school that they are
24 opening in Englewood because he is already enrolled in

1 the school and this school will not be open at a time
2 frame in which he will be able to go there because he
3 will not be an incoming freshman.

4 What I've realized is that Chicago over the last
5 50, almost 60 years has engaged in a process of DPG.
6 It's a DPG thing. Destabilization, privatization and
7 gentrification. And our community residents have
8 suffered as a result of this process.

9 They have destabilized our community to such an
10 extent that we have been victimized over the years and
11 we now have an environment that is toxic, and we have a
12 lot of problems. And there are some things that can be
13 done to create a paradigm, a shift, a change as
14 something that can create better.

15 I am not against the new school, but I am
16 against the closing of the current school because the
17 current students, they're freshman going to sophomore,
18 sophomore to junior, juniors and seniors, they are not
19 going to be able to attend that school. They're not
20 going to be able to take advantage of that, and they're
21 going to suffer as a result of that, and I think that's
22 wrong.

23 When I attended Lindblom High School, there were
24 threats to close Lindblom High School on several

1 occasions. And as we look at it today, Lindblom is a
2 thriving, robust, educational system that is producing
3 some of the finest minds that we have in this country.

4 I know that it can be done if the will is there
5 of the community residents, the City of Chicago, and the
6 school board. But what we need is we need for them to
7 understand what we need and allow us to tell them what
8 we need and them to respond to our needs and not to
9 dictate to us what they want to do with us in our
10 communities.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

12 MR. PRESTON: I'm a little short. My name is Willie
13 Preston, and I grew up in Englewood. My grandmother
14 lives in Englewood. I went to Robeson. My brothers
15 went to Harper and Englewood. But that's not what's
16 important. What's important is that in five years if
17 this plan goes through, nobody will be able to stand
18 before anybody and say that again.

19 I am against the school closings. And I'm
20 against the school closings not just because of a
21 building that I'm attached to but as a community. A
22 legacy that I'm attached to. If there was an Irish
23 building of historic, memorable, value, we would never
24 be in a room talking about closing it. When you talk

1 about the school closings, you're not closing schools.
2 You're closing the Englewood community is what you're
3 closing.

4 To the students out there, you have old-time
5 politicians marching with you. The time is over for
6 them. They closed your schools a long time ago. They
7 closed your schools in closed rooms when they gave the
8 mayor of Chicago the opportunity to appoint the entire
9 school board.

10 These people don't belong to us. They belong to
11 him. And where is he in action? Where is Janice
12 Jackson? The people that are making decisions on
13 these -- on our lives are missing in action and it's no
14 accident. So I will tell you, rise up. Get rid of all
15 of them.

16 And I can tell you one thing, if it was my house
17 that they were trying to destroy, my grandmother's
18 house, it will be by any means necessary. And Englewood
19 is our home so by any means necessary. If you care
20 about Englewood, the entire Englewood, not west, east,
21 north or the south. If you care about Englewood, then
22 stand up and rise up against them. It's time for a new
23 breed of leadership.

24 MR. CRAIG: Speakers 16 through 20, please lineup by

1 the stage. Speakers 16 through 20 lineup by the stage.

2 MS. PARKER: Good evening, everyone. My name is
3 Andrea Parker, and I am here today disgusted that CPS
4 and the Board of Education is even entertaining the
5 notion of closing all the neighborhood schools that are
6 in Englewood, leaving only a selected enrollment option
7 where the majority of students are not even Englewood
8 residents. I am against the action for many reasons
9 that you need to put on the record.

10 I am a proud graduate of John Hope High.
11 However, I graduated when I was a middle school student
12 back in 1994. I was the salutatorian that year.

13 Not only am I a proud graduate of John Hope but
14 so is my mother and all my aunts and uncles and even my
15 cousins. The roots of John Hope run deep through my
16 veins and is a pillar of the community. My church even
17 held services there while we transitioned to a new
18 building. This is a very proud heritage.

19 But what I'm not proud of is the injust of
20 closing all the neighborhood schools in Englewood. And
21 if we just allow you to continue closing schools, other
22 cities will seek -- they will see the sick behavior
23 become infected with this irrational.

24 Dr. King said that injustice anywhere is a

1 threat to justice everywhere. You are not attempting to
2 close the school with a legacy. Do you know who John
3 Hope was? He was an African American educator and
4 political activist. The first African descendant
5 president of both Morehouse College, 1906, and Atlanta
6 University in 1929 where he worked to develop graduate
7 programs.

8 When you close schools in communities where
9 there are families, you are sending a message that
10 education is not a priority. Yes. You say that you
11 will build a new state of the art school. But why not
12 reinvent existing schools and make them state of the
13 art. Why not rebrand these schools to make them more
14 enticing.

15 So I stand before you today not as a teacher,
16 not as a parent of a Chicago Public School student, not
17 even as a resident of Chicago, but I stand before you as
18 a black woman. A black woman who has been humiliated by
19 this racist system and how it's treating her.

20 I am tired of these hard decisions always being
21 on the backs of black folks whose voices be crying in
22 the wilderness of this world class city you call
23 Chicago, and we are not getting heard. This will not be
24 an option in the white community, and I don't care who

1 the CEO is. Any time you try to keep a race from
2 succeeding, that is a racist practice. And whoever
3 support racist measures is a racist.

4 So I'm going to end with, how many schools in
5 African American communities will you have to shutdown
6 before you are satisfied? So let's rebrand, reinvent
7 and reinvest in our public schools so African American
8 students will not just survive but thrive.

9 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

10 [Audience Interruption.]

11 MR. WAGNER: Good evening. My name is Lawrence
12 Wagner. I'm with the law project of the Chicago
13 Coalition for the Homeless. For the last 20 years, we
14 have been representing homeless students and parents,
15 including during the closing of the elementary schools
16 in 2013.

17 We at the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
18 stand against the closing of the four high schools in
19 Englewood. The main reason why because we represent
20 homeless individuals and families is because closing
21 that school will have a disproportionate impact on
22 homeless students.

23 Across the entire CPS system, 4.7 percent of the
24 students experience homelessness. Collectively in these

1 four high schools, the number is closer to 20 percent of
2 the students who experience homelessness.

3 The CPS closure of these schools will have a --
4 will have the inability of the students who face
5 homelessness and increase many barriers for them. The
6 attendance and success rates will be lower. They tend
7 to have mobility issues that other students don't have.
8 It will disrupt their parent/teacher relationships which
9 would lead to less days in school, which will lead to
10 miseducation and uneducation.

11 The proposed closing of these schools is also
12 unfair to the current students because they will not be
13 able to attend the new school that will open. CPS says
14 that when they close these schools that the students
15 will have access to higher performing schools that are a
16 good match for their needs but nothing in the transition
17 plans that we have seen indicate that these students
18 will have access to higher performing schools.

19 And this is critical because of a study that was
20 released in 2015 regarding schools that have closed in
21 Chicago which said that -- This is from the Chicago
22 Consortium on School Research. They issued a report
23 that says CPS school closures -- Sorry. I'm trying to
24 be quick because I know I'm running out of time. But

1 only students who attend substantially higher performing
2 schools after a school has closed will have better
3 economic outcomes.

4 The likelihood that it will happen here is that
5 when these schools close, that the students will end up
6 going into other neighborhood high schools that have
7 been created by rejoined boundaries and those schools
8 are not higher performing schools than the four schools
9 that they are closing.

10 In addition, the timeline that the CPS has set
11 for closing these schools is unrealistic. The first
12 three items on the timeline have January 30th deadlines.
13 They haven't even formally voted yet on whether they
14 will close the school. And there's other significant
15 deadlines that will come up in February, in March and in
16 April.

17 They are talking generically about spring and
18 summer. But if you read the detailed plan, they give
19 actual dates.

20 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

21 MR. WAGNER: And there's no way that they can hit
22 those dates. In finishing --

23 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

24 MR. WAGNER: We just need to do better by our

1 students.

2 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Can we have the
3 next speaker, please.

4 MS. CLARK: Hi. Good evening, everyone. My name is
5 Erica Clark. I'm a former CPS parent. I have two kids
6 who graduated from CPS, and I'm with a group called
7 Parents For Teachers. We're a city wide parent group.
8 And we are here tonight to say that we are 100 percent
9 behind the parents, teachers and students who are
10 fighting to keep these schools open.

11 We have attended many of these hearings, and I
12 have to say, I'm so tired. I'm tired of hearing about
13 the underenrollment because, you know, the enrollment
14 problems at these schools are not a coincidence. Over
15 the last decade, if you look at the trends in
16 enrollment, as the charter enrollment went up, the
17 enrollment at these four schools went down.

18 It's not a coincidence. It's part of a plan.
19 It's part of a systematic plan to destabilize these
20 schools and drive black and brown families out of our
21 city.

22 And I'm also really tired about hearing how bad
23 the schools are because I spent the morning with dozens
24 of students from this school who went down to City Hall

1 with us to fight to keep the schools open, and they got
2 in Mayor Rahm Emanuel's face, and they told him what
3 they think. Again, if the schools are so bad, why are
4 the parents and the students fighting to keep it up?

5 I've met these students. They are articulate.
6 They are bright. They are dedicated. They are
7 motivated. I don't know what they're doing at those
8 schools, but they're doing something right and they need
9 to stay open.

10 And just to address the parent -- the person who
11 got up here and said we can't have both. We can't have
12 a new school, and we can't keep these schools open. Why
13 not? In Lincoln Park, the mayor found \$20 million to
14 build an addition to their school that many parents
15 didn't even want, they didn't ask for and now the
16 school, by CPS standards, is considered underutilized.

17 Are they going up to Lincoln Park and arguing
18 that that school should be closed? Of course not.
19 These are policies that they only force on black and
20 brown families in our city, and we have to stand up and
21 fight it. And we have to remember, we cannot build up
22 one family's child but tearing down someone else's
23 children. That never works.

24 That's divide and conquer. They have been doing

1 it since the beginning of time, and we have to stand up,
2 and we have to fight back.

3 MS. ERICA: Hello, my name is Erica. I'm glad to
4 speak today because when I first walked in that door,
5 they said I couldn't speak but thank y'all for giving me
6 my card.

7 What I seen today, I seen the new school. I
8 don't mind y'all putting a new school up, I really
9 don't. But when y'all talking about taking the schools
10 down and how this school look, this is not everything.
11 This not everything. You got the basketball court right
12 on 67th Street. The football court right on 67th
13 Street.

14 My name is Erica. I'm sorry. My name is Erica.
15 I have a daughter named Mykeia. She's been a A and B
16 student since school. She attend William Harper High
17 school. My child want to be a mortician or go to the
18 Navy with her sister.

19 I have a daughter she was in the closing of
20 Phillips. They were closing that school down. But my
21 daughter now she's 19. She is in the Navy now. She
22 went to Texas, passed that test and now she back with
23 mom at Great Lakes. She come every weekend. She's
24 serving for our country. My daughter want to do the

1 same.

2 William Rainey established both University of
3 Chicago and Bradley University. He served as the first
4 president of the institution. Why are y'all trying to
5 demolition this man's building when he took time out to
6 make the building happen for our kids. If he was here
7 to see this day what y'all trying to do, he would be
8 devastated. What he did for us seem like a waste of
9 time.

10 If I truly believe Harper should be closed with
11 the rest of these schools, I wouldn't be standing right
12 here on my two feet. We got to give our children a
13 chance, please. That's all I'm asking.

14 Can we get more funds, more teachers? Can the
15 kids in the neighborhood attend Harper because they are
16 in school district? Can our special education get more
17 special education funds like the other kids getting?

18 Our vision for William and the other high
19 schools that's closing is to help our Chicago students.
20 Y'all came before and took the projects. I never stayed
21 in the projects, but y'all came before and took these
22 projects. Y'all came before and took the mall on 63rd
23 and Halsted all the way down. Y'all came back and brung
24 Whole Foods and all these other schools.

1 Every time y'all take something, y'all bringing
2 something. Take something, bringing something. When
3 y'all going to stop? That's what I'm asking. When is
4 y'all going to stop? I look on the internet every day.
5 It's not \$8.5 million. It's a hundred thousand million
6 out there that y'all have. Put it into our schools.
7 That's all I'm asking.

8 If it's not -- If y'all going to close all
9 schools down, at least leave one building up, one
10 building where these kids can go to. If y'all want to
11 build that big school up, build it because my kid will
12 not participate up in it. My child will be at home
13 doing home school.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

15 MS. ERICA: I have money for that. Thank you, too,
16 sweetie.

17 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

18 MR. FIELDS: Good evening, everyone. My name is
19 Clifford Fields, and I live in the Englewood community.
20 I had two kids that graduated from Harper and two from
21 TEAM Englewood.

22 I am against the school closing in Englewood. A
23 couple things I would like to say is that why -- I used
24 to play cards. I know I ain't the only one playing

1 cards. You get the cards and you start shuffling them.

2 Why do you got to keep shuffling our kids?

3 After you shuffle, you start dealing them to
4 your partner. Everybody that's with the school closing,
5 them is not y'all partners so I am here to tell y'all
6 that school closing is a no no. Building the kids'
7 moral is a yes. I don't know about y'all but our kids
8 need somewhere to go that's stable for them.

9 If you are going to tear down a building, put
10 that money where you can rebuild the same building where
11 our kids just stay in the community can go. I'm sick
12 and tired of people manipulating our kids.

13 Go on the north side. First and foremost, there
14 is no north, east, south or west side in Englewood.
15 Englewood is Englewood and if you are from Englewood
16 stop being a sellout for the mayor and the Chicago Board
17 of Education.

18 [Audience Interruption.]

19 MR. FIELDS: And I'm going to leave you with this,
20 Mayor Emanuel, Chicago Board of Education and all you
21 sellouts, what the hell are you thinking?

22 MR. CRAIG: Speakers 21 to 25, please lineup by the
23 stage, 21 to 25.

24 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Hello. My name is Ashley Rodriguez.

1 I am a student at Harper High School.

2 [Audience Interruption.]

3 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Y'all talking about helping
4 Englewood, but y'all trying to close our schools. If
5 y'all give us more opportunities with more classes and
6 more academics, then maybe we would have more kids.

7 Y'all steady talking about the less kids we have, but
8 y'all taking money from us. Y'all taking teachers from
9 us.

10 How are we going to get a better education
11 without the teachers that we need, without the stuff
12 that we need? Money is not what matters. What matters
13 is the education. Let me ask y'all a question. Do
14 y'all have kids that go to our school, no, so how is
15 this hurting y'all? This is hurting us. This is
16 hurting the parents that take care of us because they
17 got to find schools for us to go to. They got to find
18 other stuff for us to do.

19 They trying to give us a education -- They
20 giving us an education at home while y'all taking our
21 teachers away. Y'all taking our classes away. Y'all
22 taking money out of us. Y'all taking money away from
23 us, from our schools that we need. Y'all talking about
24 how much education is so much important but y'all taking

1 it away from us.

2 Why don't y'all just take the time to think
3 about how we feel, how this is affecting us. This is
4 affecting our education, not y'all's. Y'all got y'all
5 education so why don't y'all give us the fundings and
6 the money we need for our education.

7 Y'all steady talking about how much y'all
8 overpaying the schools for our education. So y'all
9 basically calling us dummies because we don't need that
10 money for our education when y'all should be giving us
11 the money for our education. Y'all shouldn't just be
12 talking about how y'all got to give us extra money for
13 our education.

14 So y'all telling us that we don't need that much
15 money for our education? Y'all trying to make us
16 dummies? No. We got goals. We got dreams. Let us
17 live our dreams. Let us live our goals. Stop trying to
18 always thinking about, oh, money is this, money is that.
19 Money don't matter. What matter is our education today.
20 Thank you. And, again, my name is Ashley Rodriguez.

21 MS. COBB: Hello, my name is Kabria Cobb, and I am a
22 senior at Harper High School. So I always ask some of
23 the students every day like, do y'all care about the
24 schools closing or anything? They be like, naw, they

1 are going to close anyway. But in my mind it feel like
2 you care because you in the activities and stuff that we
3 be doing.

4 And y'all be sometimes trying to help like to --
5 for some of the teachers to keep their jobs. Like they
6 fired -- They fired our security guard because they
7 didn't have enough money, but we had helped out so he
8 had came back to work with us. So they try to -- They
9 trying to run us out and everything like tell y'all --
10 tell us like we couldn't do nothing to help, but we had
11 did everything we did. We had protest around the school
12 and said that we need our security guards and stuff and
13 our teachers because they really help us with everything
14 we need.

15 [Audience Interruption.]

16 MR. CRAIG: Speakers 26 through 30, please lineup by
17 the stage. 26 through 30. 31 to 35 by the stage,
18 please. Thank you.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I don't
20 really know who I'm speaking to, but I'm going to speak
21 to the community. I'm always for a development. I go
22 around all over Chicago and speak on high-rises and
23 everything so we need the jobs and contract. But for
24 somebody to have the audacity to close all the schools

1 in one community. Ray Charles can see that. That's
2 like gentrification, you know what I'm saying.

3 I just don't know who had the nerve to say they
4 are going to close them all. I really don't have too
5 much to say but all of them? I mean, not one or two.
6 All of them? Come on, man, stop playing.

7 MR. CRAIG: Again, speakers 31 to 35 by the stage.

8 MR. GOODMAN: Good evening. Greg Goodman. I'm a
9 teacher at Lindblom. Raise your hand if you were at the
10 last meeting at Kennedy-King. All right. If you read
11 or watched the news after that meeting, the story that
12 was coming out of that was that the people in Englewood
13 are divided. And I can understand why you would get
14 that feeling coming out of that meeting. But I have a
15 feeling that we are not as divided as CPS wants to make
16 us look by giving us a false choice and pitting us
17 against either other. I want to test that experiment
18 here tonight.

19 Okay. If you believe that every young person
20 deserves access to a well-funded, high quality public
21 education, raise your hand. It seems like a lot of
22 agreement there. All right. If you believe that every
23 student deserves to have the option of attending a
24 well-funded, high quality public school in their own

1 neighborhood, if that's what they want, raise your hand.

2 All right. I see some agreement.

3 If you believe that the City of Chicago needs to
4 invest in Englewood and it owes Englewood the same
5 investments, the same wealth that it puts into richer,
6 whiter neighborhoods, raise your hand. I'm so happy to
7 see this consensus.

8 All right. If you believe it's wrong when the
9 City of Chicago fails neighborhoods like Englewood by
10 not giving them high quality, well-funded neighborhood
11 public schools, raise your hand. If you believe that it
12 is a moral disgrace for Mayor Emanuel to kick every high
13 school student in Englewood, as well as eighth graders
14 out of their community for the rest of their high school
15 experience, they will have no access to a neighborhood
16 public school in Englewood, raise your hand and say that
17 ain't right.

18 AUDIENCE RESPONSE: That ain't right.

19 MR. GOODMAN: Thank you. If you believe the City of
20 Chicago is capable of both building a brand new school
21 without turning these students out and creating an
22 education refugee crisis, raise your hand. If you
23 believe that Englewood deserves a new school but it
24 shouldn't be forced to sellout its own students in order

1 to get that school and if you believe it's time for CPS
2 to stop creating problems and start solving them, I want
3 to see you raise your hand, and I want to hear you say,
4 yes, yes to education. No, no to forced migration.

5 AUDIENCE RESPONSE: Yes, yes to education. No, no
6 to forced migration.

7 MR. BROWN: My name is David Brown.

8 [Audience Interruption.]

9 MR. BROWN: Okay. The first problem I want to
10 address is, I want to get on the fact that we have a
11 disrespectful mayor who never listens to anything that
12 anybody say.

13 Okay. Second, I want to get on the fact we have
14 our own Englewood who have decided to excuse their
15 selves. They know who they are. No names need. Cough,
16 cough, Ms. Banner. And the west Englewood, all y'all.

17 Also, we have Hougard who was the assistant
18 principal of Harper, who was the assistant principal of
19 Harper, but turns out another fake and phony person
20 standing in our face. And the crazy part is, some of
21 the paid protesters have backstabbed and traded sides
22 where they were just saying, keep all schools open. And
23 every time I see people like Chip Johnson and the
24 Network team looking at my face telling me lies about

1 how they --

2 [Audience Interruption.]

3 MR. BROWN: About how they can keep the schools open
4 and then I think, wow. I never knew so many snakes
5 could walk on two feet.

6 [Audience Interruption.]

7 MR. BROWN: So I hear that \$100 million to build a
8 new school but still have many, many excuses on how you
9 can't invest the money into four schools.

10 And last but not least, this is for you, Rahm
11 Emanuel, me and my school will not go down without a
12 fight. We will keep on striving to keep --

13 [Audience Interruption.]

14 MR. BROWN: We will keep on striving to keep not
15 only our school but every school open. Thank you.

16 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Next speaker.

17 MS. BROWN: My name is Bobbi Brown, LSC chair at
18 Harper High School. No, I'm not for closing our
19 schools, all four of our schools.

20 I am so sick and tired of people trying to tell
21 us what to do with our children. It's sad that we have
22 to come to this. All the backstabbing, backbiting, evil
23 plots, unspoken things about our schools, about our
24 children. I am so tired.

1 Now, we see God changed some of these other
2 people's heart and they came onboard with us. What
3 makes you think he can't change y'all heart. It's sad
4 because no one weapon form against our school shall
5 prosper. And every tongue rise up against us are going
6 to condemn themselves, remember that. Because see
7 Rahm -- I mean, Pharaoh -- I mean, Rahm Emanuel is
8 trying to hold our children into bondage but the devil
9 is a liar.

10 We come to set the captives free because whoever
11 the Son said is free indeed so we are free. And our
12 schools are free, too. I have spoke that, and I will
13 decree it and declare our schools will stay open.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

15 MS. TOBLER: My name is Betty Tobler, and I am a 47
16 year resident in Englewood. I don't even like to say
17 the word west no more because it's such a disgrace, but
18 I'm there for 47 years. I'm a 1981 class graduate of
19 Harper High School. I turned out very well. I went to
20 college. Got a good college education. They had art.
21 They had automotive. They had wood shop. They had the
22 basketball team.

23 I played on the girls' basketball team. You
24 will see me doing that finger roll, just look for my

1 picture. I ran track. I may not be as fast now, but
2 I'm still bright up here when this is working. But when
3 you try to tear down our children, you step over the
4 line.

5 So when you are a paid protester, you ought to
6 be ashamed of yourself when you like to see more schools
7 closing. You should want to see schools stay open and
8 build up the community, not tear down the community.

9 [Audience Interruption.]

10 MS. TOBLER: Yeah. Whatever you said. I didn't
11 hear you. Shame on every last one of you. Forty-seven
12 years in that area. I'm godfathered in. I'm not going
13 nowhere. Harper not going nowhere. None of those
14 schools going anywhere.

15 And as far as the mayor, it's called, hum, let
16 me think. Obstruction of justice. Obstruction of
17 justice. You know how we get him, citizens' arrest. We
18 can take him down. We can shut this whole next election
19 down. Primary coming up. With all of this that's going
20 on, we can suspended the whole next election.

21 Obstruction of justice. That's what we can do for him.

22 And lockup these useless politicians. You got
23 your senator. You got your state rep. You got our
24 congressman. It's time to get them up out their seats

1 and make enough noise, raise enough hell (inaudible) in
2 the seat. I know a little bit about politics, too,
3 because I volunteered for the community, for Raymond
4 Lopez who ain't no good, and it's time for him to go. I
5 walked out the door with my dignity and my pride and my
6 integrity when his partner got to singing wade in the
7 damn water.

8 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

9 MS. TOBLER: So you know what, let's put this next
10 election on suspension. It don't need to be --

11 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Next speaker, please.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good evening, Englewood. So
13 the people that just left from up here it's hard to
14 follow but I repeat. Everything that she said I agree
15 with. Black people, we are some powerful people. When
16 school start back in September, students show up at your
17 school. Show up at Harper. Show up at Hope. Show up
18 at the schools that they think they're going to close
19 because we're going to school in our community. We are
20 going to our community school.

21 Brothers, we're going to need the brothers there
22 protecting our children. Sisters, mothers, we are going
23 to need y'all up there so we can have school
24 instruction. We are going to have our boards out there

1 and our babies are going to school, to the schools that
2 they go to, to their neighborhood schools.

3 Build a new school but our schools are staying
4 open. Rahm Emanuel has to go, young people. We need
5 you. We need you. Please see me. See somebody so that
6 we can organize and make sure that you are registered to
7 vote so that we can get these politicians, so we can get
8 these drum majors out of office. The ones that Rahm
9 Emanuel was pulling their strings and they are nothing
10 but puppets and they come back to our community, close
11 our schools, keep us dumb down, okay.

12 Janice -- What's her name? Janice Jackson, is
13 that her out there at the desk? Is she sitting out
14 there and not in here listening to our children as they
15 beg to keep their schools open? We are not begging them
16 no more. Our schools will not be closed. If they're
17 closed, students let's show up on the first day of
18 school in 2019 at the school that we are supposed to --
19 that we been showing up at. Close them but we are going
20 to hold school. We are going to hold court on the
21 sidewalk.

22 Rahm Emanuel has to go, please. We need to
23 organize. This is the time now. We don't want to
24 forget this. We must never forget Laquan McDonald, 16

1 shots and a coverup. We must never forget that. We
2 must never forget the money that we have paid out of our
3 pockets when these aldermen signed off on those
4 lawsuits.

5 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Because these policemen keep
7 killing our children. Sixteen shots and a coverup.
8 Don't ever forget Laquan McDonald. Rakeia Boyd. Let's
9 talk about Rakeia Body killed by a drunk officer on the
10 west side.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

12 MR. CRAIG: Speakers 36 through 40, please lineup by
13 the stage. 36 through 40? Let's go with speakers 41
14 through 45 by the stage, thank you.

15 MS. WILLIAMS: All right. My name is Rachel
16 Williams. I am a John Hope alumni of the Class of 2009.
17 Now, I stand here as we say enrollment is low, but we
18 need to have a conversation about what the city has done
19 to divest from John Hope specifically because I remember
20 when there were a bunch of houses up on 55th. Now I can
21 see from 55th to 59th. That is the problem. You have
22 consistently divested in our schools and you can't
23 bullshit these kids and tell them -- This shit ain't
24 clean.

1 You have done this consistently. I am a CPS
2 student. I came in with the 504 plan. I came off the
3 John Hope Debate Team. They had city championships
4 under its belt and still has national ranking -- had
5 national ranking at one point. You divested from this
6 school.

7 I remember getting a call and asking if my
8 debate coach was still there and saying there was no
9 more money to keep him there. I remember when Ma'am
10 Hamilton -- Ms. Erica Hamilton who is now at Al Raby
11 High School had to be forced out to go to Al Raby. I
12 remember Mr. Jackson being the dean of students. I
13 remember Ms. Nelson, Ms. Novak, teachers who were there
14 to instill (inaudible) in us.

15 The statement of John Hope I believe is in a
16 place call hope but one of the statements was excellence
17 without excuses. And excellence without excuses is what
18 I live by. I am an organizer and this is what I do. I
19 make my living to make sure these kids have a fighting
20 chance and if you are cutting off their fighting chance,
21 you ain't serving them. No matter what school they
22 from, no matter what side of the city they from, you
23 cannot consistently divest from our children and expect
24 them not to fight back.

1 [Audience Interruption.]

2 MR. HARRIS: Hello, community. My name is Mosay
3 Harris. I grew up in this neighborhood. I went to Bond
4 Elementary School. The students I graduated with
5 went -- who lived west of Racine went to Harper. If
6 they lived east of Racine, they went to Robeson. I went
7 to Lindblom, and we still have a house in this
8 neighborhood. My sister lives in that house. My sister
9 asked me to come and speak on her behalf.

10 We grew up on 69th and Aberdeen. I don't
11 normally do this. But when I heard that they were
12 closing all of the high schools in Englewood, I was
13 like, what? Who would fix their mind and mouth to say
14 they're going to close every high school in Englewood
15 for a year and then when they reopen the high school the
16 students --

17 Here's what I say to the board members. Are you
18 treating these students in Englewood as if they are your
19 own?

20 [Audience Interruption.]

21 MR. HARRIS: You got a junior at Harper, a junior at
22 Robeson, a junior at Englewood, and you telling them I'm
23 going to close your high school, send you somewhere else
24 and when I open the new high school, you can't come.

1 And by the way since, I'm on the mic, I want to
2 ask this question. And since I -- You know, change
3 might be inevitable, but it does not have to hurt.
4 Somebody said change hurt. Change don't have to hurt.
5 We only say that when it's black people. Change got to
6 hurt. That's nonsense.

7 So when I say to the Board and it's something
8 I've been wondering, since you're building a new high
9 school and I think it's inevitable because it's blowing
10 my mind how you can open a high school in 2019 so a lot
11 of stuff has already happened. It's over. That stuff
12 have happened already.

13 So here's what I'm asking. Are we going to
14 build a high school that your child will be able to go
15 to? Is it going to be a full service high school? We
16 already know what best practices is and we know
17 (inaudible) and all of that kind of stuff.

18 And I'm going to ask this question. When has it
19 ever been a good idea to take vocational training out of
20 the public schools since we are building a new high
21 school? Huh? Was that ever a good idea? We have been
22 managed, and we have been dealt with. So since they are
23 doing something new, let's make sure they do something
24 new for us.

1 MS. SALAS: Hello. My name is Jasmine Salas. I'm
2 with the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political
3 Repression, and I'm here to say that we stand with the
4 students and the parents that are fighting these
5 ridiculous four school closings.

6 I am against the school closings because it's
7 pure politics. Chicago is broke on purpose. What I
8 mean is that -- What I mean by this is that we have
9 racist city administrators under the direction of Rahm
10 Emanuel that choose to spend money on corruption, banks
11 and the wealthy and police settlements instead of
12 spending money on education.

13 We've seen time and time again -- Oh. Time and
14 time again that the city is willing to spend money to
15 keep the police from being held accountable. This city
16 turned its heard for decades while John Burge and his
17 midnight crew tortured hundred of black folks into false
18 confessions, and today we have spent \$111 million on
19 these settlements alone.

20 It is clear that the mayor is continuing the
21 city's racist legacy by continuing to disinvest in black
22 communities. Under his leadership, dozens of schools
23 have closed in majority black neighborhoods. This city
24 raised resources between three agencies to coverup the

1 murder of Laquan McDonald. Now this city is trying to
2 close four schools for low enrollment that they've
3 intentionally created. As someone said earlier, invest
4 in these schools.

5 Rahm is not willing to support a community of
6 black families and their children by maintaining these
7 public schools. He's not willing to support black
8 teachers or black communities. And both of these
9 failures, the failures to hold the police accountable
10 and the attack on black neighborhoods are clear examples
11 of systemic racism, and it is an absolute disgrace.

12 Why don't you prioritize the futures of the
13 young people in this community. Why don't you support
14 STEM or the arts? Where is their opportunity? There is
15 no reason to close all of the neighborhood schools in
16 Englewood. This is a false choice.

17 The administration has no problem finding money
18 and spending it on things that suit the interest of the
19 folks that line Rahm Emanuel's pockets. Like the
20 millions they spend on police settlements and the \$95
21 million that they found for a cop academy.

22 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

23 MR. CRAIG: Speakers 41 to 45. Also, speakers 46 to
24 50.

1 MR. POTTER: Good evening. My name is Jackson
2 Potter. I'm with the Chicago Teachers Union. We're
3 here to fight the school closings. I was a teacher at
4 Englewood High School from '02 through '07 and my
5 students, Keith and Kameca Nellums, graduated from the
6 school.

7 Their little brother had to go to Robeson
8 because the enrollment boundaries were shifted after
9 they shutdown the building, and he had to drop out
10 because it was too much gang territory, violence and
11 interference on his route to school every day. That was
12 point nine miles from Englewood High School. They're
13 talking about sending children five to eight miles
14 outside of their current boundaries.

15 When anybody, and the mayor especially, try and
16 claim that there is safe passage five to eight miles
17 outside of their community, they are lying, pure and
18 simple. No such thing exist. We need to invest in
19 schools, invest in these communities.

20 What we know is that \$100 million, which is what
21 they're talking about for the new building, you could
22 have 500 units of rehab housing built around the school
23 that was affordable and given to families so the
24 homeless students that the Chicago Coalition is talking

1 about could live, and we can repopulate Englewood,
2 reinvest in Englewood.

3 What I want for the children of Englewood is
4 what Rahm gets for his children and then some. They
5 deserve a full-time social worker, full-time nurse,
6 full-time librarian. They deserve wraparound supports.
7 We should have a clinic. We should have a food pantry.
8 We should have job development.

9 The greatest levels of unemployment is a great
10 depression that's been visited on this community.
11 That's why we've had a loss of housing. It's why we've
12 had a loss of schools. It's why we've had a loss of
13 vibrancy. That can all be returned and restored if
14 there's a commitment. Are we committed to that?

15 [Audience Interruption.]

16 MR. POTTER: Okay. So let's hold them accountable.
17 Thank you.

18 MR. O'NEAL: How everybody doing tonight? My name
19 is Travon O'Neal, and I'm speaking for Harper. For one,
20 I would like to start off by saying, for the last
21 past -- like the two years that I have been at Harper, I
22 have been having an exciting year, learning more,
23 feeling more better about myself and feeling like Harper
24 have been a part of my family since I was born because

1 my mom, dad, all of us went there.

2 But what y'all don't know about Harper, we have
3 people from last year, like Gates Scholarships named
4 Deante Tanner, Alexis Jones, Brittany. We also have a
5 posse scholar that got a full ride scholarship to
6 Wisconsin University named Kamira Jennings. So when
7 y'all saying Harper is not teaching us nothing, y'all
8 don't understand. Y'all on the outside looking in.

9 We are learning every day. Megan can say
10 because she walked into one of my math classes today.
11 Me and my friend, we were having a discussion, like a
12 debate, about the question and the answer. Me and him
13 was going at it. They were looking at us. So I was
14 feeling good that they came in and seen us learning and
15 not just a teacher just sitting on his butt. Just
16 people that want to learn basically.

17 I am against the schools closing because I think
18 if y'all going to close the schools, at least leave one
19 school open. We do not mind combining the schools.
20 Well, we will come together as one, as black people, if
21 y'all come together as black and we can fight the CPS.
22 We can win that battle as the black community always
23 will among CPS.

24 CPS -- It feel like slavery. It feel like we

1 are underpowered. It feels like CPS is the power, and
2 we just the workers. Like we working for them and real
3 reality they should be working for us. We stand today
4 and we have people -- Yes, we do.

5 We have people feel like the new school is good.
6 I feel like it was good until I found out I'm not going
7 to be able to attend my junior year because I'm looking
8 like -- I know everybody here. Now me going to a new
9 school, going to Simeon or Bogan or anywhere y'all put
10 me, I ain't going to be able to know nobody. I ain't
11 going to be able to win nothing. I ain't going to be
12 able to get on the basketball team, football team. What
13 about my life? Y'all really putting my life in
14 jeopardy. Y'all not thinking about our future. Our
15 future is what matter. We is y'all future basically.

16 If y'all look ahead of -- I'm looking ahead.
17 I'm looking ahead and the brightness of the future, and
18 Harper, John Hope, Robeson and Englewood is the future
19 of Chicago. Thank you.

20 [Audience Interruption.]

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hey, I'm baffled that they
22 actually think that this one school is going to be a
23 better solution than improving the four that's already
24 here. I actually am. And not only are they trying to

1 close these schools, they are actually talking about
2 closing the one plus elementary school that's in the
3 South Loop down -- close by 20th and State to create a
4 new high school?

5 And I don't blame the ones that's for it to
6 close the school because the perspective is just not
7 what you know but it's what you know, what you see and
8 what you can infer so what I say each one, teach one.

9 And they actually think that building this new
10 school that's actually going to change anything. But
11 just because if you put bad apples in a new basket
12 doesn't change anything. What they fail to realize is
13 that these kids that's coming into this new school
14 already have their own mentality. They have the hood
15 mentality and that's not going -- really going to change
16 anything. That's not going to change the school five
17 years after they create it.

18 So what they really need to do is put money
19 inside the school that's already here. Rebuild those
20 and reconstruct the minds that are already here so we
21 can teach each other and rebuild our own community. And
22 that's like what we really should be doing. And this
23 happened before. We have been in meetings for other
24 school closings, and they actually closed our school so

1 what's going to change now. Now we are going to stand
2 up and actually stop this.

3 MR. CRAIG: Speakers 46 through 50. Speakers 51
4 through 55.

5 MR. HIESERMAN: Hey, y'all. Good evening. My name
6 is Drew Hieserman. I taught at TEAM Englewood for six
7 years. I'm now at Lindblom High School, a model of a
8 high school that's thriving in this neighborhood. High
9 schools and schools in general are pillars of our
10 community. How many people in here remember the Castle?
11 That was a historic building. They tore it down.

12 They have been destroying that Englewood High
13 School over and over again. There was a turnaround in
14 the '90s, then they turned it around again which brought
15 in TEAM Englewood. They have destroyed that school.
16 They have destroyed that pillar. Robeson was a pillar.
17 Hopefully it can continue to be a pillar of that side of
18 the community.

19 Harper is a pillar. Hope is a pillar, and we're
20 being asked to just cut them out. When I was at TEAM, I
21 watched. We fought against this systematic destruction
22 of our school. We watched it happened. We fought
23 against it. We saw the disinvestment. We worked our
24 hearts out trying to make sure that the school would

1 continue to function. We're talking about staff,
2 students, parents, everyone, and I know people at Harper
3 and Robeson and Hope can say the same things.

4 So what need to be done is investing in these
5 schools instead of talking about destroying the
6 neighborhood. We saw it start in 2013 when it closed
7 all the neighborhood Englewood elementary schools. Not
8 all of them but a lot, right.

9 They started telling y'all don't send your kids
10 to the neighborhood, okay. They told us in the
11 beginning and they gave us a little presentation. About
12 92 percent of all eligible students in this neighborhood
13 don't go to those four schools. Well, I'm a math
14 teacher. I'm going to do a little math for you. That
15 means about eight percent of all eligible students in
16 this neighborhood go to those four schools.

17 There are about 400 students going there right
18 now. You do the math, a little cross multiplication.
19 That means there are 5,000 eligible students that could
20 be going to those schools. Easily a thousand students
21 per school. Lots of money that they're spending on the
22 new school. It could be broken up into those four
23 schools and make them each work.

24 This is what needs to happen. Do not destroy

1 this neighborhood.

2 MS. JOHNSON: Good evening. My name is Evelyn
3 Johnson, known to the Englewood community as Mama
4 Solution. I come to you tonight with solutions. How
5 many of you understand that the City of Chicago is
6 council ran? Raise your hand. Did you know that? Did
7 you know that if the politicians who say that they are
8 in your corner, it could have went back to the city
9 council and this could have been nullified.

10 I say to you if you agree that the City of
11 Chicago has divested in your community, if you say and
12 believe in your heart that the City of Chicago fails to
13 protect your children, if you have voted for anyone in
14 the city council, then you have the right to join
15 together and file a class action suit against the mayor
16 of the city and the city council for breach of contract.
17 And if you are ready and willing, I already have the
18 lawyer that is waiting for us to come together as a
19 community.

20 You can stop this. You don't need any of them.
21 You can stop this. We have had to fight for everything
22 in Englewood. When we wanted them to upgrade our parks,
23 we had to go into federal court. That's how you got --
24 See, they're going to give me those 30 seconds. But

1 y'all got my number. You know how to get in touch with
2 me. Stop taking it.

3 Stand up for your children. And, yes, I got
4 four generations invested in Englewood and almost doing
5 what they were supposed to be doing at the time were
6 murdered right here in Englewood. And do I believe it
7 was street gangs that did it, no, I do not. I believe
8 it was CPD.

9 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Our next speaker, please.

10 MR. HARRIS: I'm not interrupting her. I'm not
11 interrupting her. Why y'all interrupting her.

12 My name is Keith Harris. My name is Keith
13 Harris. I'm the president of the Englewood Political
14 Task force, a 15-year-old organization. Also, a member
15 of the PEAC Organization, People Educated Against Crime,
16 26 year plus organization in Englewood. I'm a product
17 of Robeson High School. I have been in Englewood all my
18 life. My parents -- My grandparents moved here in 1955.

19 I got a question. How many of y'all will let me
20 come in your house and move your furniture around
21 without your permission? Okay. So why are we letting
22 the mayor and CPS come in our community and do what they
23 want to do? We can stop that. It ain't a done deal.
24 Ain't nothing done unless we say it's done.

1 So everybody in this room that has an opinion,
2 you go back and you talk to your neighbors. The
3 students, go back and talk to your fellow students.
4 Y'all got the power. Y'all got the power, and I'm
5 rolling with y'all. The students have spoken.

6 I said it last week. Y'all ain't been listening
7 to us. Y'all ain't been listening to the people that's
8 been involved in this process. But y'all lying telling
9 the media that the community is behind this. And
10 tonight the other members of the Steering Committee gave
11 y'all an ultimatum like I did. Come on. We can't
12 keep --

13 Somebody tell the mayor he got to stop playing.
14 I know y'all got a job. I know y'all doing y'all job.
15 Y'all got car payments, house payments, all that, that's
16 fine. But y'all can't do that off the backs of our
17 children.

18 And one other thing before I leave. Englewood
19 is not like no other community in this city. This ain't
20 Bronzeville. This ain't near north where Cabrini Green
21 is. We own this raggedy property. It doesn't mean they
22 can do what they want to do. And as long as we own it,
23 as long as we own it, they not going to tell us. We
24 going to tell them.

1 So I don't think I need to say it anymore.
2 Enough people, the students, the parents, the residents
3 came up here and told y'all y'all not going to close
4 these schools. My suggestion is y'all go work something
5 out.

6 My suggestion is y'all going to work something
7 out or that man down there on the fifth floor is going
8 to have a problem on his hands, and somebody is going to
9 be looking for a job and going to be having to try to
10 find how y'all going to pay for stuff, all right.

11 That's it.

12 MR. ELLIOTT: Good evening, everybody. My name is
13 Malcolm Elliott, and I'm senior at TEAM Englewood. I
14 feel like what y'all doing is wrong, and it shouldn't be
15 this way. I feel like, why would y'all close down all
16 four of the schools and y'all know -- Everybody feel
17 like they family in each one of the schools.

18 We got friends from Harper, John Hope, Robeson
19 and Englewood. We know everybody in the community so
20 what's the problem? Why we got to go to another school,
21 and we know that our neighborhood cares about us. I
22 have been going to TEAM Englewood since my freshman
23 year. And every since my freshman year everybody been
24 trying to help us keep on a good road.

1 My sophomore year. Ms. Russell came in to be
2 our principal, and she stepped up to the plate and
3 helped me to get to where I am now. She helped me
4 become the person I am today. If it wasn't for her, I
5 wouldn't be as strong as I was today.

6 I feel like y'all just bogus because these
7 schools are important. These schools are important and
8 y'all trying to close all these schools to make a new
9 school? Y'all just bogus because we family. And it
10 doesn't make sense that y'all want to do this to us.

11 As a black young man in the Englewood community,
12 I feel like it's a shame. It's just a shame. And to be
13 the last class of my school, it's just not fair enough.
14 It's just not enough. I hate to say this, but y'all
15 should keep the schools open. Save our school. Keep
16 the schools open. Keep our neighborhood schools open
17 and keep our family up in there. That's all I got to
18 say.

19 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you all very much. We have
20 had the conclusion of our speakers, our public comment
21 session. I would like to say that our community
22 meeting, the public hearing will be held next week --
23 about two weeks, January 30th from 5:30 -- January 30th
24 from 5:30 to 8:00 at 42 West Madison in the board room

1 where the judge will hear the concerns from the
2 community.

3 Okay. We still have ten more minutes. If
4 anybody wants to register, you need to register and sign
5 up again. You registered already? Okay. If you would
6 like to speak again, you are welcome to, just register
7 outside.

8 Did you register to speak, ma'am? But did she
9 register to speak? If she registered to speak, we
10 follow the process. Thank you.

11 If anybody wants to stay and hear the remaining
12 speakers, if somebody signs up, you are welcome or you
13 are welcome to depart. But for those that are coming up
14 to speak, please register and then we will continue.

15 January 30th.

16 Okay. We do have one more speaker. We do have
17 one more speaker here.

18 MS. ALITA: Hello.

19 [Audience Interruption.]

20 MR. JOHNSON: Excuse me. We have a speaker.

21 MS. ALITA: Can I get y'all attention for one
22 second. I know everybody ready to go, and I'm not going
23 to reiterate what everybody already said. We know where
24 this money need to go. It's here and they need to use

1 the money properly. But most importantly what I heard
2 nobody say is that this is the greatest opportunity for
3 us to unite as black people.

4 Rahm Emanuel is trying to hurt us but look at ho
5 it's bringing us together. We need to stand solid.
6 Like Helen said and like mama said, there's complaints
7 that need to be filed, and we need to stand with these
8 kids. When they ready to shut these schools down, when
9 they ready to knock them down, we need to be right there
10 so it don't happen. Because all of that money that they
11 said that we didn't have, just like they were able to
12 pull 85 million out of nowhere, they can pull some more.

13 If they saying we can't break that money up to
14 make sure all that four of these schools can be invested
15 into and don't have to be torn down, they can get
16 another \$85 million. As a matter of fact, they can take
17 that 95 million that they're using to build the police
18 playhouse, and they can give that money to our kids that
19 is so underdeveloped and help develop them.

20 So there's ways around everything, but we cannot
21 fall. When stuff start seeming rocky, that's when we
22 have to really rise up. Like right now we all are
23 standing solid together. We have to keep this same
24 fight when we start getting discouraged because that's

1 when they going to come in and sweep this all from under
2 out feet because I'm going to be honest with you, it's
3 already (inaudible.)

4 This school is going to be built whether we like
5 it or not. But what we can do is stop them from tearing
6 down the four schools. And we ain't got to let our kids
7 go to that new school because then guess what, it's
8 underutilized just like the ones that's in Englewood
9 that they trying to tear down. That's how you stand up.

10 Don't let your kid go to that school. Make them
11 put them resources that they putting in that new school,
12 make them put it in the schools that we already got
13 because that's where our kids are safe at. That's where
14 our kids are comfortable and that's where they live at.
15 They shouldn't have to go nowhere else to be successful.

16 They should be able to say, I grew up in
17 Englewood, I graduated in Englewood, and I'm successful
18 because of my Englewood teachers. Invest in the
19 educators. That's what they need to do. Invest in
20 these people. All these -- As a matter of fact, nobody
21 said this.

22 One of the most important things that our
23 children don't have is counseling. All of our children
24 are trauma. They have been affected by trauma. Every

1 day they hearing shots. Nobody is paying attention to
2 that. How can a kid come to school and be successful if
3 they're traumatized? They need to also invest in the
4 kids' mental health.

5 So with that being said, I stand with everybody
6 that's trying to stop these schools from being shutdown.
7 My name is Alita. Y'all can contact me. Everybody in
8 here should know how to get in touch with me. I'm with
9 all of that.

10 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

11 If you are going to exit, please exit out this
12 way so we can continue to hear the speakers. Thank you
13 all.

14 Next speaker, please.

15 MR. JACKSON: Good evening, everyone. I know
16 everybody is ready to leave. My name is Ronald Jackson.
17 Let me tell you how your aldermen really think about
18 you. The aldermen had a meeting for special education,
19 for special education at 2:30 p.m. Who has a meeting at
20 2:30 p.m. when parents have to get off work and pick up
21 their kids?

22 You have these same aldermen who wants to get
23 elected. The only reason they're here now is because
24 it's election time next year. You need to get together

1 and get these aldermen out. Let me tell you what the
2 real deal is.

3 During the election, when they covered it up,
4 those aldermen who was in office know what was going on
5 and did not come to the people in their neighborhood.
6 They know. Who believe that when Rahm Emanuel give that
7 fake crying that that was real? Those same aldermen got
8 on TV talking about he was sentimental. He understand.

9 If you believe that, then you go ahead and vote
10 for these aldermen. These are these same sellouts who
11 knock at your door and come out and vote. They know who
12 they are. I'm not scared of none of these aldermen.
13 I'll call them out. Number one. Brooker who also sold
14 out the school. Yes.

15 The Alderman Lopez. He got on the news and said
16 he approved it but yet you got people talking about he
17 didn't. Go on and pull it back up. Like I sit there
18 and say, the Board of Education is also trying to close
19 a Level 1 elementary school on 22nd and Cermak. A Level
20 1 school but yet they're saying that we're not advanced.

21 I asked them that question. Why are you closing
22 a Level 1 school? But yet, no charter school has been
23 closed except maybe two. And the last 20 years, they
24 took programs out. Then they got the nerve to put up on

1 here that it's going to cost over \$100 million to revamp
2 these schools.

3 What about the school they're closing? You go
4 to those schools right now. Them schools is not even
5 secure. Those abandon buildings that they closed is not
6 even secure. But yet they're saying that it's going to
7 take over \$100 million to redo the school.

8 Ask the Board right now at the next board
9 meeting, where is the paperwork showing that these
10 schools have been maintained?

11 They want to build a new school but yet the kids
12 is not going there. For all of those who want to sit
13 there and say they agree with the school being built,
14 their kids are not going to go there.

15 When the school open up, as they say, in 2019,
16 your kids are not going to go there. Ain't no way in
17 the world you're going to close something in 2018 and
18 have something open and ready in 2019.

19 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

20 MR. JACKSON: It even took over three years to put
21 (inaudible) Foods up.

22 MR. JOHNSON: We have one more. This is our last
23 speaker here. This is our last speaker.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I sat here today, and I

1 listened to some of the things that you people were
2 saying about the schools closing. And the young lady
3 from Harper, I thought she spoke real eloquently when
4 she was saying that, you know, why won't they invest
5 money in our schools, you know. Why won't they rebuild
6 our schools. Why won't they do this.

7 The brother, Darrell Smith, said, you know, you
8 ain't even got to put 85 million in our schools. Put 10
9 million in each school and watch how these kids will
10 perform because all these resources keep going --
11 leaving Englewood and going to these other places and
12 those kids are excelling.

13 You don't hear about the other schools getting
14 shutdown. Everything here is always about turnaround
15 and alternative schools and that type of stuff. So to
16 me it's like I understand it, you know what I mean. I
17 understand what's going on. I understand that is the
18 plan. And I want to use a word insidious.

19 See, we sitting here and a lot of us are against
20 each other. A lot of us are for it. A lot of us are
21 against it. But one thing that we should all have in
22 common is our kids. So it's a statistic that I want you
23 guys to think about, you know. Whether you know it or
24 not, your little kids, little kids five years old,

1 they're being studied right now.

2 This is not nothing that I made up myself. Go
3 look it up on the internet when I leave here. They're
4 being studied right now at five years old because by the
5 time that they're ten years old, if they can't read on a
6 fifth grade level -- If they can't read on a fifth grade
7 level, three out of four of those kids, that's 75
8 percent, will be in prison by the time they're 21 years
9 old. You understand what I'm saying?

10 So they're studying your kid now. If you know
11 that illiteracy -- If they can't read, that mean they're
12 illiterate. If illiteracy and criminology go hand in
13 hand, then you will be thinking about improving our
14 schools, but that's not what you're thinking about.
15 They are studying your child right now to understand how
16 many prison cells they need in the next ten years.

17 So these school closing is by design. Don't
18 think this is a accident that they're really trying to
19 make stuff better, you understand what I'm saying.
20 While we're sitting here talking about I want this for
21 the betterment and all this, that's not for the
22 betterment. Put some money in these schools and then
23 watch how we perform.

24 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. This is our last speaker.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Black people. Black people.

2 If you go back and remember --

3 MR. JOHNSON: Excuse me, ma'am.

4 [Audience Interruption.]

5 MR. JOHNSON: If you are exiting the building,
6 please -- Thank you all for coming.

7 [Audience Interruption.]

8 MR. JOHNSON: I'm sorry. We had a conversation.
9 The young lady did not register. I'm not being
10 disrespectful. She did not register. Thank you for
11 exiting the building. Thank you very much.

12 [Whereupon, the meeting
13 concluded at 8:00 p.m.]

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) ss:
3 COUNTY OF COOK)

4
5 SHAHERA ALI, being first duly sworn, deposes
6 and says that she is a Certified Shorthand Reporter in
7 Cook County, Illinois.

8 That she reported in shorthand and thereafter
9 transcribed the foregoing;

10 That the within and foregoing transcript is
11 true, accurate and complete and contains all the
12 evidence which was received and the proceedings had upon
13 the within cause.

14 _____

15 SHAHERA ALI, C.S.R.

16 084-002666

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